

MELROSE

Luncheon honors student essay contest winners

■ Students of the Juvenile Justice Center School had a chance to write about Black History Month and African-American leaders as part of Black History Month celebrations sponsored by the school and Team metro Melrose.

Miami Herald Staff Report

Team Metro Melrose partnered with the Juvenile Justice Center School to sponsor the first Team Metro Black History Month Essay contest and luncheon.

The contest increased students' awareness of the contributions African Americans have made, according to an event statement.

Special curriculum activities took place in the classroom in February, leading to a special luncheon Feb. 24 that recognized winners of the essay contest.

The contestants had to write on how they felt about Black History Month and they were encouraged to highlight African-American leaders.

The luncheon took place in the school gymnasium, 3300 NW 27th Ave., which school and Team Metro Melrose staff decorated with African artifacts that included tribal masks, posters and statues.

An African painting, donated by Team Metro Neighborhood Compliance Officer Mufatau Folorunsho, was raffled as a door prize.

The essays were on display and students read their entries aloud and discussed the life and work of Martin Luther King Jr. and the importance of the civil rights movement.

Bridget Davis, Team Metro Melrose Outreach specialist, served as mistress of ceremonies and introduced Orlando Milligan, principal of the Juvenile Justice Center School, who talked about his personal and professional experiences.

Dale Dobuler, superintendent

of the Juvenile Justice Center, and Antonio Martinez, district director for special and alternative education for Miami-Dade County Public Schools, also spoke.

Dignitaries present were also invited to speak. They included Darlene Bell Alexander, assistant general counsel, University of Miami; Howard Chang and Joe Frazier, VP Records; David Hope, assistant county attorney; Karyn Kinsey and Vernita Tucker, Northside District police officers; John Solomon, professor, Miami Dade College Medical Center Campus; and Sam Walthour, Team Metro director.

Those who helped with the essay contest and luncheon included Mercedes Aguilar, Dany Berthold-Moise, Bridget Davis, Suzanne Salichs and Samora Supplice of Team Metro Melrose and Gina Clark, Judy Cobb, Susan Julivich, Orlando Milligan, Gerline Plez and Sharon Shackelford of the Juvenile Justice Center School.

In addition to the luncheon honoring the students who won the essay contest, the winners were presented with backpacks from VP Records complete with goodies, and U.S. Savings Bonds.

"It was a great opportunity for our students to display their writing skills and talents," Milligan said. "The event recognized students and helped build their self esteem, thus helping them to become productive citizens. It is wonderful to have a community partner like Team Metro to sponsor the event."

THURSDAY, MARCH 9, 2006 | EDITOR: MOHAMED HAMALUDIN | 305-819-8286 | MiamiHerald.com

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